

Special Supplement for Leipzig Fair Visitors

TEN-MINUTE GUIDE TO EAST GERMANY

DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT

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LEIPZIG FAIR:

EAST-WEST TRADE SHOP WINDOW

The Leipzig Trade Fair, opening in the famous East German commercial centre on September 5th, will be nearly ten times as large this year as in 1946, the date of the first post-war fair.

In that year only 26,000 square metres of floor space were taken by exhibitors, and many of them were not in a position to deliver the goods shown.

In 1954 the fair has grown to 230,000 square metres, and would have been even bigger if more floor space had been available.

As in previous years the Soviet Union, the People's

Democracies and the German Democratic Republic are able to give impressive evidence of their economic progress, and their ability to export; this year important exporting firms from many western countries, particularly Britain, will for the first time since the war put on big exhibits.

The fair, which for the past eight years has been largely a "shop-window of the east" has now become a shop-window for the west too, and centre of first class importance for East-West trade.

(Turn the page for "An English Businessman Sees Leipzig")

48 DIVISIONS FOR W. GERMANY

Disclosures by Bonn M. P.

Plans for a West German Wehrmacht of 48 divisions, with a strong air force and parachute troops, were decided upon at secret negotiations in Bonn during July.

This was disclosed in Berlin on August 26th by West German Parliamentarian Karl-Franz Schmidt-Wittmack, who has been given asylum, together with his wife and daughter, in the German Democratic Republic.

Herr Schmitt-Wittmack, prominent member of Dr. Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party, in an international press conference in Berlin, gave details of the decisions taken at the secret July conference between General Alfred Gruenther, American Supreme Commander in Europe, and Hitler General Adolf Heusinger.

The West German parliamentarian, who was a member of the Parliamentary Committee for European Security, told the press conference that nationalistic and militaristic elements in West Germany were sure that other West European countries would not be able to raise so many divisions as West Germany, and that this would ensure West German hegemony.

The West German Parliament was not in a position to prevent such elements from winning control in a new Wehrmacht, he stated.

(Full details of Herr Schmitt-Wittmack's statement on next page.)



"Call it what you like, but this is the formation we want, Mr. Adenauer"

(From "Krokodil", Moscow)

An English Businessman Sees Leipzig

By E. V. Tempest, Managing Director of M. Tempest and Sons, Exporters of Woollen Goods, Bradford, England

Last year we exhibited at Leipzig, and it seemed to us to be one of the most important symbols of world trade unity; as a result of our experiences we had no hesitation in coming back again to exhibit at the 1954 Fair.

There is an interesting comparison to be made between the position in Britain with regard to the fair in 1953 and 1954. Last year there was absolutely no encouragement given to British businessmen by our Chambers of Commerce; the official Export Credits Guarantee Department declined to guarantee orders given by the German Democratic Republic; publicity in the British press was non-existent, except for a scare story about an alleged polio epidemic in Leipzig.

As a result our firm was the only British textile firm exhibiting, and

there were only isolated British engineering firms represented by a small agency. On our way to Leipzig through West Germany, West German officials approached British businessmen bound for the fair, and gave them various "warnings". Some of them were even prevailed upon to turn back without going to Leipzig at all.

This year, there is a complete contrast. In all parts of Britain the trade climate with regard to the fair is good. In our branch alone, 30 textile firms, including some of the most important weavers, are exhibiting, and many important engineering firms and others will also be represented. Chambers of Commerce in various cities are arranging for parties of businessmen to attend the fair, the trade and popular press in Britain has had quite a lot of information, given in an objective

way, about the fair; perhaps most important of all the Export Credits Guarantee Department has announced that it will give the usual guarantees in connection with all business done with the German Democratic Republic.

What has caused this change of outlook? It is obviously the economic uncertainty of British exports in the face of United States policy. This is forcing the British businessman to change his outlook.

The Leipzig Fair stands for normal east-west trade relations in a world weary of war. The British people are realising more and more that the tremendous and continued progress of the Soviet Union, China and the People's Democracies cannot be prevented by "cold-war economics", and that normal east-west trade will help to bring peace.

(In an interview)

48 WEHRMACHT DIVISIONS

Herr Schmidt-Wittmack's Statement

On August 26th 1954, West German Member of Parliament Karl-Franz Schmidt-Wittmack, member of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party, addressed a press conference in East Berlin attended by journalists from Britain, the United States and many other countries. Here are the main points made by Herr Schmidt-Wittmack:

After full consideration I have come to Berlin and asked the Government of the German Democratic Republic to give me the opportunity to address the public from this platform.

In my capacity as member of the Christian Democratic fraction of the Federal Parliament, and member of the Parliamentary Committee for European Security, and the Parliamentary Committee for All-German Questions, I have, particularly in the most recent period, had the chance of studying closely the methods and the perspectives of Dr. Adenauer's policies.

As a result of this intimate association, particularly during the past few weeks, I reached the conclusion that the manner in which the Chancellor was clinging to the European Defence Community was not in the interests of our nation, and that it entailed serious danger to prospects of peaceful negotiation.

Recent events, and particularly the results of the Geneva Conference, showed me that there was a very genuine chance to achieve international understanding by means of negotiation. This means that it is possible to negotiate about the German problem. Rearmament at any price, and under quite different conditions than those ruling when the European Army was first mooted, thus appears to me not to be the right thing to do.

This attitude on my part was strengthened by conversations with various other members of parliament who know

conditions in the USA at first hand. Herr Bucerius, for instance, stated on his return from America that influential circles there were interested in producing a sort of new Korean shock. For this reason a unilateral dependence upon American policy appears to me to be unwise.

These political impressions and lessons led me to break with the EDC policy, and to judge military preparations from another standpoint.

In the recent period information has been made public showing that the Blank Office (West German War Office, ed.) has practically completed preparations for the establishment of an army of 400,000 man in twelve divisions, together with an air force of 80,000 men and a navy 20,000 strong. These figures no longer correspond with the preparations which have already been completed.

In June and July of this year, a secret special conference was held in Bad Godesberg and Bonn between representatives of the United States and the Federal Republic; at this conference a mobilisation plan for the raising of a German contingent of 24 divisions was decided upon, not 12 divisions as was originally foreseen. At the same time the establishment of a reserve of a further 24 divisions was considered.

General Gruenther, Commander in Chief of the NATO forces, represented the United States at these negotiations, and General Heusinger and General Cruewell represented the German side. It was decided to set up a special committee of American and German military experts, who should complete the detailed plans by November 1st this year at the very latest. General Heusinger will represent Germany on this committee.

At this secret conference the establishment of a German air force with considerable striking power, and the raising of various specialist formations such as

parachute troops was decided upon. As is well known, American military material for German use has been stored for a considerable time in the Kaiserslautern area.

The West German Parliament will scarcely be in a position to prevent undemocratic and nationalistic elements from penetrating the German Contingent in the EDC Army. Such elements reckon that the other countries participating in EDC will not be in a position to raise an equal number of divisions, and by this means they hope to seize the hegemony in Europe.

These facts forced me to realise that the one-sided policy of the Chancellor would lead to foreign political tension, and could have terrible consequences for Germany.

This was shown with shocking clarity in the lecture delivered by General Heusinger to the EDC Committee in July this year on atom strategy and the results of a future war. With sober factualness Heusinger spoke about the nature and the effects of the atom bombs. He called the atom bomb the most effective weapon for destroying the supplies of the civilian population. He announced that 30 atom cannon are stationed in West Germany, capable of shooting shells each of which had the same effect as the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

It is difficult to describe shortly all the reasons which made me abandon, with a heavy heart, my political and my personal circle of work in Bonn and in Hamburg. But I have come to the considered opinion that the "policy of strength" can lead neither to the reunification of Germany nor to a sensible solution of the problems of foreign policy.

In my future political activity I shall endeavour to work in a Christian and democratic sense for a policy of understanding.

The Answers to Your Questions:

TEN-MINUTE GUIDE TO EAST GERMANY

What is the German Democratic Republic, and how is it governed?

The German Democratic Republic was established in October 1949 in what was previously the Soviet Zone of Germany. Its area is 41,390 square miles (about the same as Bulgaria, or Tunisia, or Cuba or the state of Ohio) and its population over 17 million (about the same as Rumania, or Burma, or Canada and Guatemala combined).

In the German Democratic Republic war criminals and nazi industrialists have been expropriated and their factories and estates taken over by the people, education has been democratized, all forms of militarism, fascism or racial hatred are forbidden both by law and in practice (for details of these steps, see further questions below).

The Five Year Plan covering both nationally-owned and private industry has brought sinking prices and rising wages. The Government is composed of representatives of the five parties — Socialist Unity Party, Christian Democratic Party, Liberal Democratic Party, National Democratic Party and Democratic Peasant Party.

The Government is appointed by the People's Chamber, elected by all men and women citizens over the age of 18. The present People's Chamber was elected in October 1950. Its four-year term expires in October this year, and general elections to a new People's Chamber will be held on October 17th.

Are former nazis back in high office again in East Germany?

No. All key positions in the German Democratic Republic are occupied by veteran anti-nazis, many of whom suffered many years of imprisonment under the Hitlerite regime. Not a single member of the East German cabinet, for instance, was associated in any way with the nazi regime. (Various newspapers in western countries have alleged from time to time that there were leading nazis in the East German government. GERMAN REPORT has challenged them to name names, but there has been no response.)

In West Germany the situation is quite different: two members of the West German cabinet were officers

In June this year, electors in East Germany were asked to vote on the following question:

"Are you in favour of a peace treaty and the withdrawal of occupation troops, or are you in favour of the European Defence Community and of occupation troops remaining for fifty years?"

More than 93% of the voters gave their votes against the European Defence Community, which would imply the formation of a new West German Wehrmacht.

After the formation of the German Democratic Republic in October 1949, the Soviet authorities in Germany continued to supervise both internal and external affairs to ensure that the terms of the Potsdam Agreement (denazification, demilitarisation, democratisation) were carried out.

The supervisory controls were gradually relaxed, and on March 25th 1954, all Soviet supervision of both internal and external affairs was ended, and the German Democratic Republic became a sovereign state. Soviet occupation troops remain temporarily to guarantee security as laid down by four-power agreement, and the functions of the Soviet High Commission in Germany were limited to security questions and liaison with the western allied authorities on all-German questions arising from four power agreements.

in Hitler's black-uniformed SS Elite Guard, and two others were members of the Storm Troops.

In East Germany, former ordinary members of the nazi party who were not guilty of war crimes, and who show their desire to work for the rebuilding of Germany, have ordinary civil rights, but any attempt to spread nazi doctrine or militarist ideas is severely punished. The Constitution of the German Democratic Republic states specifically in Article 6:

"... the dissemination of racial or national hatred, militaristic propaganda, war propaganda... is a crime under the criminal code."

What are "Nationally-Owned Factories"?

Soon after the war, the people of what was then the Soviet Zone of Germany decided in a referendum by an overwhelming majority that the property of former active nazis, war criminals and war profiteers should be expropriated (the voting in Saxony for instance was 2,683,401 votes for expropriation, and 571,600 against). The lists of businesses to be expropriated were drawn up by local committees representing the political parties and trade unions, and the owners had an opportunity to appeal.

Since almost all heavy industry was in the hands of active nazi collaborators, or such trusts as IG Farben, condemned by all four occupation powers as war criminals,

nazis, this expropriation measure meant that industries passed into the hands of the state. In 1952 nationally-owned and cooperative enterprises accounted for 81% of industrial production.

The directors of the nationally-owned factories are mainly former workers: an example is Kurt Zeirold, director of the "Deutschland" coal mine in Zwickau. Zeirold was formerly himself a pit-worker, active in the trade union movement, who was imprisoned by the nazis. In 1945 he was elected chairman of the pit trade union committee by his fellow miners, and in 1948 he was appointed director of the pit.

All profits made by nationally-owned factories benefit the population as a whole either as wage increases, price cuts or new capital investments.

Is it true that "the Russians" run the main factories?

No. Since the beginning of 1954 there have been no more Soviet-owned factories in East Germany.

At the end of the war a number of important factories were taken over by the Soviet Union as reparations for the incalculable damage which the German troops had caused in the USSR. They did not dismantle these factories and send them back to the Soviet Union, but put them back in production here under Soviet directors.

Wages and conditions in these Soviet-run factories were exactly the same as in nationally owned plant, and many of them became model factories with greatly increased output under Soviet management.

In July 1952 a large part of these factories were handed over to the German people, and on January 1st 1954 the last 33 factories passed into German ownership. Since then they have been run as nationally-owned factories.

In most cases the factories were far more valuable when they were handed to the German people than when they were originally taken over by the Soviet authorities.

The "J. V. Stalin" Electric Apparatus Works in Trep-tow, Berlin is a good example of this. In 1945 the factory was 80% destroyed by bombs. The Soviet management invested over 23,000,000 marks in rebuilding and extension, and today the factory is turning out seven times as much as it did in 1936.

What role does private industry play?

Private industry in East Germany is of considerable importance in the textile and clothing industry, fine mechanics and optics and in wood and glass working industries. There has been a steady increase in the production of private industry parallel with the general rise in production. In the second quarter of 1954, for instance, private industry turned out 26% more goods than in the same quarter of 1953. In the same period total industrial production, including nationally-owned industry, rose only 12.5%.

Are there private shops and private craftsmen such as painters and plumbers?

The majority of retail trade in East Germany is carried out by private shopkeepers. About 79% of retail trade and 82% of inns and restaurants are in private hands. The trading margin for retailers varies from 5% to 50% according to branch. Private shopkeepers can engage as many assistants as they need.

There is a total of 280,000 craftsmen's undertakings in East Germany employing 850,000 persons. These include such trades as plumbers and painters, as well as small undertakings such as dress-makers, tailors, toy-makers, and so on. Any private firm employing less than ten persons is classified as a craftsmen's undertaking. In many places craftsmen have joined together in cooperative groups for more economic provision of raw materials and marketing.

Are there still big estate owners (Junkers) in East Germany?

No. After the end of the war all estates of over 250 acres, and all the landed property of war criminals was expropriated and shared out amongst poor peasants, resettlers and agricultural workers. New

small holdings were given to more than 200,000 families in these categories, and 350,000 who had previously had very small holdings got additional land. Some of the expropriated estates which were unsuitable for distribution such as stud farms, seed nurseries and so on, were converted into nationally-owned estates run on the same lines as nationally-owned factories.

At the end of 1953, 74% of the arable soil was tilled by private peasants. Very generous credits are granted to private peasants by the Government Peasant Bank to help in the payment of seed bills, fertiliser costs and so on.

Private peasants may employ agricultural workers. They must pay them full trade union rates, and provisions for overtime pay, paid holiday and so on are similar to the provisions for industrial workers.

For their heavy field work peasants can hire tractors and other machines at very cheap rates from the machine and tractor stations established in all parts of the countryside.

Are peasants forced to join collective farms?

No form of compulsion is used in the organisation of the agricultural production cooperatives established in many parts of East Germany. By the end of 1953 about 5000 such cooperatives had been established by voluntary association by a total of 140,000 peasants. In the simplest type of cooperative all land is tilled cooperatively, but machines and animals remain private property. In the most advanced form of cooperative all agricultural work is done cooperatively. In all types, however, members can retain one acre of ground for their kitchen garden or orchard.

Members of the cooperative are free to resign if they wish, and they then receive back their land or land of similar size and quality.

More and more peasants are joining cooperatives, because they see that their neighbours who have joined now have an easier life and a higher standard of living.

Have you a national health system?

All wage earners pay ten percent of their earnings up to a certain figure into the social insurance fund, which provides all-in sickness insurance for themselves and members of their families, as well as pensions.

In case of sickness a worker or office employee receives 90% of his average pay for the first six weeks and 50% of his average pay for a further 20 weeks.

Medical attention, hospital treatment, specialists fees and all expenses for medicine etc., are met by the sick insurance fund. The social insurance also maintains over 300 sanatoriums and 76 TBC hospitals, in which some 400,000 patients were treated during 1953.

More and more attention is being devoted to preventive medicine, and the installation of clinics in factories.

How long is the working week?

The maximum working week is 48 hours, with reductions for young people. Overtime may only be worked with the specific approval of the trade union, and may not exceed a total of 4 hours on two successive days. Overtime pay time and a quarter, with time and a half for Sunday work, and double pay for work on legal holidays such as May Day, Easter and Christmas.

The basic paid holiday is twelve working days yearly, with longer terms of up to 24 working days for young people, very heavy workers, and various other categories.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IN EAST GERMANY

	(in million marks)	1936	1950	1953
Basic industries:				
(Power, mining, metallurgy, chemicals, building materials)		5,761 (100 %)	7,728 (134 %)	11,538 (200 %)
Metal working industries:				
(Engineering, electrotechnical, fine mechanics & optics)		4,712 (100 %)	5,685 (120 %)	10,115 (214 %)
Light industries:				
(Wood, textiles, clothing, leather, tobacco, paper & cellulose, printing		6,232 (100 %)	6,468 (103 %)	9,148 (147 %)
Food and confectionery:		4,402 (100 %)	3,455 (78,5 %)	6,454 (146 %)

(from a report delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht on March 30th 1954)

Why is food still rationed in East Germany?

Meat, sugar and fats are still rationed in East Germany: all other foodstuffs are on free sale.

The reason for the retention of rationing in East Germany is exactly the same as the reason for food rationing in Britain until early in 1954 — the provision of steady supplies of essential foods at reasonable prices.

The rations are differentiated according to the work done: the lowest grade of ration card entitles the holder to 1350 grammes of meat, 900 grammes of fat and 1200 grammes of sugar monthly; a miner or heavy factory worker receives nearly one thousand grammes more meat and twice as much fat.

Everyone can supplement their rationed foods by buying any quantity they like of meat, butter, etc. at free market prices, which are considerably higher than the rationed prices.

All rationed foods, plus basic unrationed foods such as bread and potatoes are considerably cheaper in East Germany than West Germany. Here is a comparison of the prices of some of the main rationed and unrationed goods:

Articles rationed in East Germany	East Germany	West Germany
Beef (per kilogramme)	2.06 marks	4.05 marks
Pork (per kilogramme)	2.86 marks	5.13 marks
Butter (per Kilogramme)	4.20 marks	6.20 marks
Sugar (per kilogramme)	1.08 marks	1.36 marks

Unrationed goods

Rye bread (per kilogramme)	.48 marks	.62 marks
Potatoes (per kilogramme)	.16 marks	.20 marks

Do people get enough to eat in East Germany?

See the answer given above. But here are some official figures of consumption per head during 1953 in both East and West Germany. (All weights in kilogrammes):

	East Germany	West Germany
Butter	9.4	6.1
Meat and meat products	41.3	41.0
Sugar	31.0	23.7
Potatoes	197.3	174.0
Flour and bread	120.3	96.5

What are the People's Police?

The People's Police are a police force charged with the usual tasks of controlling traffic, preventing crime and ensuring law and order. The ordinary police in town and country are normally armed with revolvers, as in almost all countries except Britain. Frontier police, members of the mobile gendarmerie and men on various

sorts of guard duty carry rifles or machine-pistols in the same way as police on similar duties in France, Italy and West Germany.

Particular precautions have been taken to see to it that the People's Police have a really democratic training, and that they do not continue the bad old Prussian traditions of brutality and officiousness. Nearly all key officers are veteran anti-fascists with a record of active struggle against the nazis. The commander of the mobile police, for instance, is Heinz Hoffmann, who fought against Franco in Spain in the ranks of the international brigade.

Official figures published in Berlin on February 13th 1954 showed that the police formations in East Germany are relatively less than half as strong as those maintained in West Germany. In West Germany there is one policeman for every 115 members of the population; in East Germany there is only one policeman for every 280 persons.

Over the past two years the Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly proposed to the West German Government that representatives of both sides should meet to discuss the size, armament and stationing of their respective police forces. All these approaches have been ignored by the West German Government.

At the Berlin conference in February this year, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov proposed that the conference should urge "agreement be reached concerning German Police in Eastern and Western Germany, including questions of the number and armament of all types of police" (British White Paper Cmd. 9080 page 130). The proposal was simply ignored by the three western foreign ministers.

What about religious life in East Germany?

The subject of religious freedom is very fully dealt with in the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic. Here are some of the more important passages:

"Article 41: Every citizen enjoys the right of full freedom of belief and conscience. The unhindered practice of religion is protected by the Republic.

"The installations of religious communities, religious rites and religious instruction may not be misused for unconstitutional or party-political purposes. The right of religious communities to state their attitude towards the vital questions of the nation are not thereby limited.

"Article 42: ... The practice of private or civil rights, and suitability for public service are independent of religious belief. No-one shall be obliged to disclose his religious beliefs. Administrative organs have only the right to enquire as to membership of a religious community in so far as rights

or duties depend upon such membership, or if the information is needed for official statistical purposes.

"No-one may be forced to participate in a church service or ceremony, nor to use a religious form of oath.

"Article 43: There is no state church. The freedom of association in religious communities is guaranteed.

"Article 44: The church is guaranteed the right to give religious instruction on school premises. The religious instruction will be given by persons chosen by the church . . . Parents or guardians decide whether children will participate in religious instruction.

"Article 48: Parents or guardians have the right of deciding on the membership of children in religious communities up to the age of fourteen. From this age the child itself shall decide upon its membership in a religious or philosophic community."

These constitutional conditions are scrupulously observed by the Government and authorities of the German Democratic Republic, and Protestant and Roman Catholic churches are open normally throughout the whole of East Germany.

In July 1954 more than ten thousand West German Protestants, including many members of the West German Parliament attended the Evangelical Congress held in Leipzig, and 20,000 Roman Catholics from East Germany travelled to West Germany at the end of August 1954 for a Catholic Congress there.

The Reverend Guenther Jacob, Superintendent of the Evangelical Churches in the area of Cottbus, East Germany, told the World Council of Churches in Evanston USA on August 20th 1954: "Church life in East Germany today is neither sensational nor dramatic."

Public holidays in East Germany include Easter, Whitsun, and two days at Christmas.

Can East Germans visit West Germany, and vice versa?

Yes. In the past year the formalities formerly connected with visits have been reduced to a minimum, and this summer a total of 40 trains ran every day between the two halves of Germany. The railway authorities reported that the trains were always packed. The formalities still entailed in such a visit (customs inspection at the zonal boundary; inspection of identity cards, etc.) are unavoidable so long as the two halves of Germany have different currencies and different economic systems, and so long as certain groups in West Germany are devoting much time and energy to sending spies and saboteurs into East Germany.

Is a good education difficult to get?

Every boy and girl between the ages of 6 and 14 must attend school in the German Democratic Republic; attendance is of course free. In the first post-war years there was overcrowding in many schools because of war damage. Extensive building and rebuilding of schools has now removed this difficulty.

There has been particular improvement in village schools: under the old regime village schools with one class-room and one teacher were the rule rather than exception. In 1945 there were over 4000 such schools. By 1953 there were only 137 of them left, and the last of these will soon be replaced by normal multiclass schools.

More than 20 percent of all elementary school children go on to secondary school from the ages of 14 to 18. In pre-Hitler Germany the proportion was only five percent. About half the secondary school children come today from worker or peasant families, compared to only one-fifth ten years ago. Languages taught at secondary schools are Russian, English, French, Latin and Greek, with Polish and Czech at some schools.

All corporal punishment is strictly forbidden in the schools of the German Democratic Republic.

Must women go out to work?

No. There is no forced labour in the German Democratic Republic, and millions of women stay at home and look after their children and their dwellings. But if a woman wants to work, there is plenty of work to do, and the principle of equal pay for equal work is rigidly adhered to. Women are forbidden to do heavy physical labour, particularly in mining and foundry work, and various other jobs particularly dangerous to health. With these exceptions, every job in the German Democratic Republic is open to women.

One of the cabinet ministers is a woman, many mayors and members of parliament are women, and at the other end of the scale hundreds of girls are working as tractor drivers, metal workers, and in other jobs which have been regarded as the reserve of men. Conservative reluctance on the part of men to see women working in such jobs has been overcome now that the men see that the women get equal pay, and that there is no question of them undercutting pay rates.

What about working mothers who have children?

Mothers receive leave on full pay for five weeks before giving birth and for six weeks afterwards. They may not be dismissed from their jobs from the third month of pregnancy onwards.

To help working mothers who have small children to be looked after, the number of creches, nursery schools and children's day nurseries is being rapidly increased.

Is any provision made for old age pensioners?

Old age pensioners receive a pension averaging about 86 marks from their 65th year. The pension was raised in 1950 from the previous average rate of 73 marks. The government is aware that this pension is still rather low, but the position of pensioners, as of all other citizens, is improving from year to year as prices go down and social services are improved. In West Germany pensions are considerably lower, and the position of pensioners becomes progressively worse as prices rise.

250 Questions and Answers

Readers with a knowledge of German will find a mass of information about the German Democratic Republic in a book called "250 Questions and Answers" published by the Committee for German Unity in Berlin.

We have obtained a supply of this book, which is packed with valuable facts and figures, and will be glad to send a copy to any reader outside East Germany who would like one. The book is at present only available in German.

Social Democrats for New Berlin Conference

The time has come for a new Four Power Conference on the German question, following the breakdown of the European Defence Community negotiations, West German Social Democratic chairman Erich Ollenhauer stated in Bonn on August 25th. This conference must seek a method of attaining a European security system acceptable both to the United States and the Soviet Union.

Erich Ollenhauer announced that the policy of the West German Social Democratic Party was to strive for three immediate aims:

A more active German policy of reunification;

A Four Power Conference on Germany;

A European security system extended to include Great Britain and as many other countries as possible.

West German Strikes Continue

Two hundred thousand Bavarian metal workers, on strike for higher wages, were still out solid after nearly three weeks as we went to press. Representatives of civil servants, miners, and other unions with a membership of more than four million have threatened strike action very soon if their wage claims are not met.

W. Berlin Votes for Peace

West Berlin friends of peace, despite constant police interference, have queried a total of nearly 200,000 West Berliners in the plebiscite for or against a new West German Wehrmacht. 190,108 gave their vote for a peace treaty and the withdrawal of all occupation troops; 2945 voted for EDC and a new Wehrmacht; and 6431 withheld their vote.

Democratic GERMAN REPORT

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Berlin W.2,
Germany.

15 MONTHS OF THE NEW COURSE

In June 1953 the Government of the German Democratic Republic decided to throw all its efforts into improving the standard of living of the population, and to slow the tempo of the construction of heavy industry.

The result of this new policy, known as the "New Course" is shown clearly in the month by month summary of the fifteen months which have followed the change in policy:

1953

June 11th: Government of the German Democratic Republic announces "New Course", aimed to provide better life for all sections of the population, and a slowing in the forced tempo at which heavy industry is being constructed. First measures include handing back of private shops and small holdings which had been seized for tax arrears; better rations for some sections; and rail fare reductions.

June 17th: Fascist agents attempt to disrupt new government policy by staging rising, storming jails and releasing war criminals, arson, etc. The rising fails as the result of firm government measures and lack of support from population.

June 25th: Quantities of goods which farmers must deliver at low prices are sharply cut; credit of 600 million marks given for supplementary house-building; social security grants to various classes of sick persons are improved; number of cheap holidays for trade unions increased by 50%.

July 1st: Old age and disability pensions raised by 10 marks monthly.

July 7th: Fish taken off the ration; fish prices sharply cut.

July 20th: Soviet Union grants credit of 231 million rubles for purchase of butter, fish and wool in USSR.

July 23rd: On the suggestion of the Free German Trade Union Federation the government raises all wages in the lowest wage groups. Private craftsmen and small farmers get tax reductions.

July 27th: Big price reduction: soap, electric bulbs, perlon stockings, typewriters and many other goods reduced an average of 40%.

August 6th: Doctors and dentists employed by national health authorities get salary increase.

August 22nd: Soviet Government announces that all reparations from German Democratic Republic will end on January 1st 1954 (representing a saving of 2537 million dollars for East Germany); cancels all post-war debts; and makes a free gift to East German people of 33 big factories in East Germany seized at the end of the war as war booty. Soviet Government also grants new credit of 590 million rubles for purchases in USSR.

October 2nd: East German People's Chamber reduces capital investment in heavy industry by 600 million marks and votes corresponding larger grants for light industry and housing.

October 15th: Pay-as-you-earn income tax sharply cut for 80% of all workers.

October 26th: The biggest price cut ever seen in East Germany — almost everything from matches to bicycles are reduced by up to 50%. The price reduction plus tax reductions of October 15th mean average yearly rise of 200 marks in real income of every man, woman and child.

December 10th: Sweeping improvements in medical and safety services in the factories; improvements in canteen meals and holiday services; wage increases for those categories of workers unaffected by previous measures; more money for housing.

1954

April 1st: Trade union holiday rates cut to only 30 marks for 14 days holiday.

May 13th: Peasants and land workers driven from their fields in West Germany will be granted farms in East Germany.

June 8th: Big price cuts for canned fish, biscuits, free-market lard, shoes and cigars.

July 8th: Further big steps for improvement of social services, with big capital investments in the building of new hospitals, sanatoria and clinics; more ambulance and clinics for country districts; and great increases in the number of students studying medicine at the universities.

July 28th: Prime Minister Grotewohl, announcing results of first year of new course, gave figures showing that in first half-year 1954 meat consumption was up 17%, fish consumption 56%, fats 33%. Wool textiles available to the public had doubled in quantity compared to the same period in 1953.

August 19th: Education to be further improved, the cabinet announces. Big school building programme provides 27,000 extra places, and average annual expenditure per elementary pupil is increased from 286 marks to 303 marks.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

Since the annual Leipzig Fair is now on once again it seems appropriate to recall one of the most tasteless and silly articles ever written about East Germany and the fair.

I dealt with this article, entitled "Caviar for the Comrades" by Joseph Wechsberg, which appeared in the June 1953 edition of the "Readers Digest", in these columns more than a year ago, but my remarks are, I think, worth reprinting:

The article, which purports to describe a trip to the Leipzig Trade Fair in East Germany in March 1951, begins with the classic sentence: "American reporters are not exactly welcome behind the Iron Curtain".

Snob Travelogue

In seven pages of snobbish travelogue, Mr. Wechsberg then makes quite plain some of the reasons why many American journalists are not exactly welcome almost anywhere. According to his own account, he and his three American companions devoted the two or three days which they spent in Leipzig to:

travelling by a route not covered by their visas;

not going to the trade fair for which they had received visas;

distributing bribes to all sorts of people, including policeman;

dealing on the black market;

ordering their landlady about in a properly "colonial" fashion;

and making provocative propaganda remarks in shops and restaurants.

To cap it all, they went to the Soviet pavilion at the trade fair, and screamed with laughter at a statue of Stalin. "As we ran out we heard

By John Peet

his (Alsop's) hollow laughter reverberated by the walls of the large mausoleum".

Just one question, Mr. Wechsberg. Would you regard it as good manners if a bunch of foreigners, visiting the United States, stood snickering and guffawing before a picture of Franklin D. Roosevelt?

So much for Mr. Wechsberg's account of the Leipzig Fair.

I think it provides one of the answers to people who complain that western journalists sometimes have difficulties in obtaining visas to visit the German Democratic Republic.

People's Police

I was thumbing the other day through a copy of the magazine "Die Volkspolizei", the bi-monthly magazine of the German People's Police.

It is a well produced magazine, with a lot of technical information on police training, records of interesting or unusual jobs done by the police in the preceding weeks, and so on. The particular number which I was looking at, the second July issue, had many pages of pictures and description about the work of the police during the big floods at the beginning of that month.

But what particularly caught my eye was one article urging policemen to endeavour to get a good all-round education, and not to underestimate the importance of literature and the theatre.

"Another way to improve the general education and the cultural standard of our police is to organise

regular visits to the theatre and to concerts" this article stated. "A good slogan is: every policeman should get to the cinema once a week, and to the theatre at least once a month".

Introduction

Since this issue of GERMAN REPORT will be going into the hands of many hundreds of people who have never seen or heard of it before, I should like to devote a few lines to introducing myself and the paper.

Up to June 1950 I was chief correspondent in West Berlin for the British news agency Reuters. In this capacity I could see very clearly how certain American circles were driving ahead with their campaign to give guns back to the German militarists and to renazify West Germany; I could see too how they were distracting attention by circulating the most monstrous lies about developments in East Germany.

Other Side

I therefore severed my connection with Reuters news agency, and came to live in the German Democratic Republic, to work side by side with the men and women here who are putting their backs into the task of building a new, better, and above all peaceful Germany.

For the past two and a half years I have been issuing GERMAN REPORT from the democratic sector of Berlin every fourteen days. The aim of the paper is to bring to the English-speaking world the truth about the two Germanys — about the rebirth of militarism and fascism in West Germany, and about the peaceful development of the German Democratic Republic.

If you are interested in these developments, then fill in the coupon on this page, and we shall be glad to send you the next few issues of the paper without any obligation.

Week's Story

In July West German Security Chief Dr. Otto John fled to East Germany; in August he was followed by Christian Democratic Parliamentarian Karl-Franz Schmidt-Wittmack. Government officials and parliament members in Bonn now greet each other with surprise and the words "What, are you still here?"

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